

Town Manager's August Newsletter Submission

At this upcoming August 3 Town Council meeting, the body will hold four public hearings, three of which will be items that may appear on the November referendum for public approval. Those three items are improvements to the water pollution control facility, improvements to school and town buildings, and energy efficiency upgrades to school and town facilities.

The upgrades to the water pollution control facility are paid for through state grants and aid and the recently implemented sewer use fee. Therefore, there is no additional cost to residents and taxpayers if this referendum question is approved. The purpose for the upgrades was initiated by the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for various notices of violations. In order to correct these State concerns, significant upgrades were necessary. To qualify for State grant assistance in this project, a sewer use fee was necessary. The cost of the total project is \$36 million and will include a full-scale upgrade to the water pollution control facility as well as infrastructure improvements to pump stations and service lines. This will be the first major upgrade to the facility and its components since the 1970s. More information about this project will be available on the Town's website if approved to be on the referendum by Council at the August 3 Regular meeting.

The school and facility upgrades represent a \$44 million, multi-year project, similar to the ROADS program that has been successful in Town. The project includes roof and window replacements, code compliance upgrades, security and hardening improvements, and several municipal parking lot improvements. In the case of many proposed mechanical, roof, window, and envelope upgrades, it would be the first improvement since the school or building was first built. If approved, there would be prioritized list of projects to be completed in a timely manner, over several years, and without disrupting school or municipal schedules and functions. A list of each building and the proposed upgrade will be available on the Town's website if approved to be on the referendum by Council at their August 3 Regular meeting.

The energy efficiency upgrades to school and town facilities, if approved, pay for themselves and would not require additional costs or fees from residents and taxpayers. The process, called energy performance contracting, achieves facility improvements to lighting, building management systems, boilers, HVAC systems, and more through the savings in energy costs from the aforementioned upgrades. The project, if approved, would cost \$11 million over a 15-year lease-finance agreement, whereby the overall savings outpace the overall costs, savings the Town (after lease payments) tens of thousands of dollars per year. A complete list of all energy saving measures, their cost, the investment grade energy audit, agreements, and other documents will be available on the Town's website if approved to be on the referendum by Council at their August 3 Regular meeting.

These are big projects that mean a lot to the Town and its residents. In total, they save the Town millions of dollars in future replacement, maintenance, and construction costs. They improve our schools, their environment for learning, and the safety of our children. They improve our municipal buildings and infrastructure, making them a better environment for our residents to conduct their business and a safer atmosphere for employees. They make the town more energy efficient, reducing its carbon footprint by thousands of tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

If you have any questions or concerns that you would like answered about any of the above projects, your chance is the August 3 Town Council Regular meeting, where each project will have a separate public hearing. Public hearings start at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The schedule is as follows:

6:30 p.m. is for energy performance contracting, 6:40 p.m. is school and town facility improvements, and 6:50 p.m. is water pollution control facility improvements.

I am also here to answer any questions you may have. Please call the Town Manager's Office at 860-253-6350 to reach me. See you on Monday.